

Miscellaneous.

STRICTLY TRUE.

She was a wild little creature with her pretty, dimpled face full of mischief, always saying or doing things, as if giving people wrong impressions, and getting the better of the important title of Mrs. Dudley Rivington. Her husband, who was decidedly grave and sedate, thought she did not support his name with sufficient dignity, and he sometimes undertook to lecture her on what he considered her 'little failings,' but with some mischievous reply she was always sure to put to flight his gravity.

'My dear,' said Mr. Rivington, one day as he entered the apartment where his wife was sitting, 'I have heard something very strange.'

'What is it?' asked Lizzie.

'I have heard that your parents were very much opposed to our union, and that we were obliged to elope at night by jumping out of the back window, and that then we had gone immediately to the clergyman, and had been married without the knowledge of your parents, who, in consequence, had disinherited you, and had refused to have anything more to do with you.'

'How very strange!' exclaimed Lizzie; 'how could such a report have originated?'

'Have you not said something in fun which might have given rise to it?'

'No,' said Lizzie, thoughtfully, and then she added, 'Oh, no, I remember. The other day when Sally Brewster was here—you know she has such a horror of old gentlemen—she asked me, in her innocent way, how I came to marry a person so much older than myself. For my part, I said, "I never would wish to marry an old man, and he and I wouldn't let me if I did." She is such a honest little creature, and always takes everything so literally that I wished to astonish her, so I replied, "I sprang out of the back window at night, when my parents were asleep, and I was married early the next morning." I suppose that must have been the way the story originated, and it has gained, of course, by circulation.'

'But, Lizzie, what did possess you to say such a thing?' continued Mr. Rivington.

'Only for mischief, I meant to have undeceived her before she left me, but I forgot it.'

'Do you think it right to say what is not true, even in fun, Lizzie?' asked her husband with a grave look.

'But it was strictly true, Dudley; for do you not recollect my telling that the night before we were married, I became alarmed by the cry of fire next door, and I sprang out of the window, which was near the ground and as the first feeling of fear was over, I returned to awaken my father and mother?'

'What you said then was true in the letter, but was it in the spirit?' asked Mr. Rivington, as he gazed earnestly into his wife's face.

'Now, grand pa,' said Lizzie, as she stroked down his whiskers, 'please don't preach me a sermon, for I was only in fun when I said it, and I think people might understand me; every one is so dreadfully matter-of-fact.'

'But when you make your assertions with so grave a face, you must expect people to think that you mean what you say.'

Lizzie laughed and wondered what made her husband so very sober, and wished that he was a little more playful; while he in his turn wished that his wife was not quite so full of spirits. But he had still considerable annoyance to go through with before Lizzie gave up this 'little failing.'

One day he went up to his wife as she was looking out of the window, and, putting his arm around her, inquired why she was looking out so wistfully.

'I was searching for some blue sky, or sunshine for I am perfectly crazy to go out a little way this afternoon.'

'That is sad,' said her husband, with an air of mock solemnity, 'for I believe there is no lunatic asylum very near here.'

'Now, Mr. Solomon, be quiet! there is no comfort in telling one's troubles to you; I suppose you would have me say that I should like to go, wouldn't you?'

'You might express it rather more strongly than that, Lizzie, without being so extravagant; you will certainly get yourself into trouble if you continue to talk in this style, saying things you do not mean. It was only this morning reported that I had failed, and my wife was teaching a school; do you know how the report originated?'

'No; I am sure I did not.'

'Are you certain that it did not come of your mischief?'

Lizzie blushed as she replied, exclaiming, 'I suppose it might have been through Mrs. Mince, she is such a gossip.'

'But what would give her the idea?'

'Why, it was probably from a remark of mine. I had forgotten about it until you spoke; really she is a prying little provoker.'

'But what was your remark?' asked her husband smiling.

'It was something I said the other day, when she came in and found me seated in the midst of a number of school children who had come for the purpose of learning to crochet a mat. She looked astonished at seeing such a circle of little people and I said laughingly, "I have turned teacher," whereupon she asked, in a surprised tone,—"Where you?" And when I saw that she believed me to be earnest, I said very gravely, "Yes." Then she inquired if my husband had failed, and as I recollected that it was only very morning that he had failed in the attempt to get on your new mat, which was too small for me, I answered her in the affirmative. I quite enjoyed the good lady's look of eager curiosity, as she received this piece of information, and the soon after took her departure, but I never thought of her telling it round.'

'That was certainly a very good foundation for the report, she could not have wished for a better,' said Mr. Rivington, calmly.

'What I said was all perfectly true, Dudley, but it was really ridiculous of the woman to take me so literally.'

'I am afraid, my dear, that your fun will give me considerable trouble.'

'I am very sorry,' she said, and she raised her sweet, childish face up to his.

'As he bent down to imprint a kiss on her rosy lips, she felt tempted to give up the plan which she had formed for preventing further mischief, and he recollected the many times that her love of fun had drawn them into trouble, and with an effort he managed to carry it through.

'I shall have to leave you for a few days, my dear,' he said.

'Leave me?' she exclaimed, 'for what?'

'I am obliged to go to A——— to-morrow morning, on business, but I will make my stay as short as possible.'

It was with a heavy heart that Lizzie retired

that night. She could not bear the thought of being separated from her husband even for a few days, and her active imagination conjured up all sorts of dreadful things which might happen to one or the other of them before they should meet again. But it was necessary for him to go, and the next morning she followed him to the door, and received his parting kiss, and then returned to the room to cry. But her spirits were not easily depressed for a long time, and she soon dried her tears, and busied herself about the house, thinking all the time how pleasant it would be to have him return when the few days had expired.

In the afternoon the bright sun seemed to invite her out to walk, and she accordingly went. She met a number of her friends, but some bowed coldly, while others passed her with a scornful look. At one time she discovered two ladies conversing together and looking at her. What could it mean? Then she caught the words:

'Very strange, is it not?'

'Yes,' was the reply, 'but then they were so unkind to each other, that one can scarcely wonder at it.'

'That is true,' continued the first 'he is so very grave, and she so full of mischief.'

As Lizzie walked quietly on, wondering what they could mean, and if it was possible that they referred to her, she lost the remainder of the conversation. Then the words reached her from another direction:

'I should think she would not like to be seen out so soon.'

And again, 'I think that it was her extravagance that drove him off.'

Lizzie returned home feeling sick at heart; and earnestly longing for her husband to come back to her, she felt sure that some false report was being circulated, but how she could not tell. While she was musing on this subject the door opened, and Mrs. A——— was announced. Lizzie rose to receive her visitor, who remarked in a commiserating tone—

'You poor little creature! I have come to console you.'

'Thank you,' said Lizzie, mistaking her meaning, 'I almost think I need consolation; being left alone in this great house with only the servants.'

'Yes,' continued Mrs. A———, 'but you may be sure that every one will take your part, for people always do sympathize with the ladies, you know. I think he was a perfect wretch to leave you, and so soon too.'

Her meaning began to break upon Lizzie's mind, and she exclaimed almost fiercely, 'Of whom are you speaking?'

'Mr. Rivington,' replied Mrs. A———, in some surprise at Lizzie's excited manner. 'I heard that he had quarrelled with you, and that was the reason of the separation; and knowing that you must feel lonely, I hastened to offer my sympathy, trusting that you would excuse the intrusion.'

Our heroine drew herself up with considerable dignity, as she replied, 'Allow me to say that you have been misinformed; this is the first that I have heard of any quarrel, and the separation was caused by some business which has called my husband away for a few days.'

Mrs. A——— hastened to apologize, and soon after left the house. Then came honest little Sally Brewster, who threw her arms around Lizzie's neck, and exclaimed in a tone of sincere sympathy—

'My poor dear Mrs. Rivington! how sorry I do feel for you!'

'Why do you feel sorry for me, Sally?' asked Lizzie, in a calm tone.

'Oh, because—because—you know why,' said Sally laughingly.

'I know nothing about me to excite sympathy, except that I have been left alone for a few days in consequence of my husband having been called away on business.'

Sally replied in a tone of surprise, 'why I was informed that—that—'

'That my husband and I had quarrelled, and separated,' said Lizzie.

'You have heard of the report, then, and it is not true?'

'Oh, yes, I have heard it, and I have also been puzzled with it, but I cannot imagine what gave rise to such an idea.'

Sally did not hurry away as Mrs. A——— had done, and Lizzie found it great comfort to have a friend with her. She was obliged to receive visits of condolence all the afternoon, and in the evening her gentlemen friends came to offer their sympathies, as they said, but Lizzie thought it was rather to satisfy their curiosity, and she wished herself anywhere rather than in a country village.

This state of affairs continued until the return of Mr. Rivington, which took place rather sooner than his wife had anticipated. Lizzie ran to meet him, and throwing herself into his arms burst into tears.

'What ails my pet?' he asked, as he kissed her affectionately.

'Oh, Dudley!' cried Lizzie, 'there has been such a strange report circulated throughout the whole place—they say that you and I had quarrelled, and that was the reason that you had gone away and left me.'

A quizzical air came over Dudley's face as he replied, 'What strange stories, my dear, gossamer credence! How could this have arisen, do you know?'

His wife replied—

'I have not the slightest idea; I am sure it could not have been from anything that I have said, this time.'

Dudley passed his hand thoughtfully across his face as he observed slowly, 'Could it have been from a remark that I made on the morning I left? I recollect now of meeting one of the neighbors, who inquired how you were. I replied that you were very well when I last saw you, but that we had a few words together and separated. I noticed that he looked rather surprised at my answer.'

'Oh, Dudley! how could you?' exclaimed Lizzie.

'Why, my dear, I was only in fun, and then he said it was strictly true; but people are so very matter-of-fact—any one might know that I would not leave you, no matter for how short a time, without having a few parting words with you.'

'But it has placed me in such a very strange position. I did not think that you Dudley.'

Mr. Rivington folded his little wife in his arms, and asked to be forgiven. Lizzie had generously enough to see how much trouble she had occasioned the cause of bringing upon him in a similar way, and now in her turn, she laughed heartily over the mortification she had suffered.

Her husband's ready proved a most effectual one, and from that time she was more careful to preserve truth in the spirit as well as in the letter, of what she said.

Charles M. Clay, in a communication to the "Country Gentleman," writes that for many years, he has granted a thousand titles a year.

A CURIOUS QUESTION.

BY SPENCER W. COOK.

A daughter?
Well, what brought her?

Kitty asks, "How came she here?"
Half with joy, and half with fear.
Kitty is our eldest child,
Eight years old, and rather wild—
Wild in manner, but in mind
Wishing all things well defined.

Kitty says—"How came she here,
Father? Tell me! It's so queer.
Yesterday we had no sister,
Kitty! I'm sure I should have missed her
When I went to bed last night,
And this morning hailed her sight
With a strange and new delight.
For, indeed, it passes all
To have a sister not so tall
As my doll, and with blue eyes;
And—I do declare—it cries!
Last night I didn't see her, father,
I'm sure, I had much rather
Stayed at home as still as a mouse,
Than played all day at grandma's house.
She is so pretty, and so tiny;
And what makes her face so shiny?
Will it always be like that?
Will she swell up plump and fat,
Like my little doll? or tall,
Like my mother was? Tell me all—
All about her, papa dear,
For I do so long to hear
Where she came from, and what brought her—
Yours and mamma's brain new daughter."

A daughter—another daughter!
And the question is, "What brought her?"
Spence, our boy, but three years old,
Says the nurse did, and is bold
In defiance of them both—
Sister to yield his place is lost;
And pointing, feels his nose's point
When I declare 'tis out of joint.
But, though the childish explanation
Be food enough for child's vexation,
We older folk must better find
To feed the hunger of the mind.
To us, of larger sense and power,
This link of heaven, reaching
From earth to heaven—this new-born soul,
Come fresh from where forever roll
The countless years through yonder heaven,
Hath deeper cause for thinking given.

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To feed the hunger of the mind.
To us, of larger sense and power,
This link of heaven, reaching
From earth to heaven—this new-born soul,
Come fresh from where forever roll
The countless years through yonder heaven,
Hath deeper cause for thinking given.

A daughter!—another daughter!
And the question is, "What brought her?"
Spence, our boy, but three years old,
Says the nurse did, and is bold
In defiance of them both—
Sister to yield his place is lost;
And pointing, feels his nose's point
When I declare 'tis out of joint.
But, though the childish explanation
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